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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-555-67

17 October 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Increased Pressures on North Vietnam (U)

1. (U) Reference is made to:

a. NSAM 288, dated 17 March 1964, subject: "Implementation of South Vietnam Program (U)."

b. JCSM-982-64, dated 23 November 1964, subject: "Courses of Action in Southeast Asia (U)."

c. JCSM-811-65, dated 10 November 1965, subject: "Future Operations and Force Deployments with Respect to the War in Vietnam (U)."

2. (U) The purpose of this memorandum is to identify those military actions consistent with present policy guidelines which would serve to increase pressures on North Vietnam (NVN), thereby accelerating the rate of progress toward achievement of the US objective in South Vietnam.

3. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that NVN is paying heavily for its aggression and has lost the initiative in the South. They further consider that many factors--though not uniform nor necessarily controlling--indicate a military trend favorable to Free World Forces in Vietnam. South Vietnam, in the face of great difficulty, is making slow progress on all fronts--military, political, and economic. However, pace of progress indicates that, if acceleration is to be achieved, an appropriate increase in military pressure is required.

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4. ~~(S)~~ Military operations in Southeast Asia have been conducted within a framework of policy guidelines established to achieve US objectives without expanding the conflict. Principal among these policy guidelines are:

- a. We seek to avoid widening the war into a conflict with Communist China or the USSR.
- b. We have no present intention of invading NVN.
- c. We do not seek the overthrow of the Government of NVN.
- d. We are guided by the principles set forth in the Geneva Accords of 1954 and 1962.

5. ~~(TS)~~ Although some progress is being made within this framework, the Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that the rate of progress has been and continues to be slow, largely because US military power has been restrained in a manner which has reduced significantly its impact and effectiveness. Limitations have been imposed on military operations in four ways:

- a. The attacks on the enemy military targets have been on such a prolonged, graduated basis that the enemy has adjusted psychologically, economically, and militarily; e.g., inured themselves to the difficulties and hardships accompanying the war, dispersed their logistic support system, and developed alternate transport routes and a significant air defense system.
- b. Areas of sanctuary, containing important military targets, have been afforded the enemy.
- c. Covert operations in Cambodia and Laos have been restricted.
- d. Major importation of supplies into NVN by sea has been permitted.

6. ~~(TS)~~ The Joint Chiefs of Staff consider that US objectives in Southeast Asia can be achieved within the policy framework set forth in paragraph 4, above, providing the level of assistance the enemy receives from his communist allies is not significantly increased and there is no diminution of US efforts. However, progress will continue to be slow so long as present limitations on military operations continue in effect. Further, at our present pace, termination of NVN's military effort is not expected

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to occur in the near future. Set forth in the Appendix are those actions which can be taken in the near future within the present framework of policy guidelines to increase pressures on NVN and accelerate progress toward the achievement of US objectives. They require a relaxation or removal of certain limitations on operations. The Joint Chiefs of Staff recognize that expansion of US efforts entails some additional risk. They believe that as a result of this expansion the likelihood of overt introduction of Soviet Bloc/CPR combat forces into the war would be remote. Failure to take additional action to shorten the Southeast Asia conflict also entails risks as new and more efficient weapons are provided to NVN by the Soviet Union and as USSR/CPR support of the enemy increases.

7. (U) The Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that they be authorized to direct the actions in the Appendix.

8. (S) This memorandum is intended to respond to the questions raised by the President at the White House luncheon on 12 September 1967; therefore, the Joint Chiefs of Staff request that this memorandum be submitted to the President.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

Earle G. Wheeler

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachment

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APPENDIX

JMARRY OF ACTIONS WITHIN PRESENT GUIDELINES WHICH COULD RESULT IN ADDED PRESSURE ON THE ENEMY

SPECIFIC ACTIONS	ADVANTAGES	RISKS/IMPACT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Haiphong and Hanoi prohibited areas. spot and Haiphong restricted areas to be proper. Haiphong Zone to 10 miles. roads up to five miles from CTR border. ChacMAC strike and restrike prerogative 1 targets outside of redefined restricted 2S to authorize strikes against targets in defined restricted areas on a case-by-case (to include Haiphong port). replenish as required, mine fields in ches and harbors at Haiphong, Hon Gai and /extend mine fields as necessary to t bypassing. the of navigable RVN rivers. Mine navigable waterways throughout RVN to within 5 NM of rder (authority currently limited to those of 20° N). offensive naval surface force operations t RVN military/logistic watercraft and t suitable targets in RVN ashore north Attitude to the redefined buffer zone RAOON operations now limited to south of 20° N). based SAM missiles against RVN aircraft both ater and in airspace over RVN. e bombing of Laotian waterways traffic (SEKONG). b special saturation bombing interdiction air-zones in Laos, e-g., northwest of DMZ, Nepe Gia Passes. ht of Laos, by day and night, by B-52s en route from targets in Vietnam or Laos. bombing attacks on Laos. e requirement for cover strikes in SVN when g targets in Laos. authorized size of exploitation force. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater destruction of RVN war-supporting facilities. Increased destruction of air defenses including airfields. Reduce logistic support of RVN/VC. More efficient use of available forces. Possible impact on reducing friendly casualties, particularly in critical areas. I Com/1042 area. Permits enemy reaction against targets of opportunity. Reduce import of war-supporting materials. Interdict internal waterway LOCs. Destroy waterborne logistic craft and block channels. Require great RVN sweeping effort. Reduce POL and other cargo distribution. Interdict coastal water traffic. Reduce use of land LOCs by harassing gunfire. Increase destruction of enemy air forces. Inhibit enemy air operations. Increased interdiction of LOCs and reduction of supplies to NVA/VC. Greater operational efficiency and quicker reaction time for B-52s. Disrupt sanctuaries. Increased efficiency of interdiction. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC. Disrupt sanctuaries. Reduce supplies to NVA/VC. Improve intelligence. Discourage use of Cambodia as sanctuary for NVA/VC forces. Provide self-defense of US forces. Harass RVN within country. Require RVN to divert resources to internal security. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charges of escalation. Increased use of CTR airfields for storage or training, but not for combat missions. Increased CTR AAA and Engineer support in RVN. Soviet Union may cancel existing negotiations with the US and initiate propaganda campaign. Possible Soviet actions to increase tensions in other parts of the world, but major confrontations would be unlikely. CTR would strengthen defensive posture and may increase military aid to RVN; unlikely to initiate offensive air or surface actions. No specific military reaction from communists. Some increased propaganda against US action. Possible naval and air reaction by RVN in northern waters. CTR or Soviets might provide additional patrol craft. RVN air and surface attack possible. USSR or CTR might provide RVN with coast defense missiles. No immediate reaction other than propaganda. No Laos reaction. Possible political reactions. Souvenna would probably not object if he could deny the actions and avoid publicity. Possible increased NVA forces and activities in Laos. Cambodia would protest expansion of operations to Cambodian soil and might seek to defend its territory. Adverse political reaction. NVN would accuse the United States of attempting to bring about downfall of Government of RVN.